

In 2014, Lebanon made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. While both the anti-Human Trafficking National Action Plan and the National Action Plan for Human Rights await formal adoption by the Parliament, Government agencies in cooperation with other organizations began to implement them. The Government allowed Syrian refugee children to access education. The Reaching All Children through Education project, which aims to improve access to education, was launched. Also, the Ministry of Social Affairs in cooperation with UNICEF formed a program to enroll children in schools and improve working conditions for children. However, children in Lebanon continue to engage in child labor, including in agriculture, and in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation. Labor law enforcement is weak due to a lack of resources, and enforcement agencies do not maintain enforcement data. There are not sufficient programs and services that target children engaged in agriculture, street work, domestic service, or commercial sexual exploitation.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Lebanon are engaged in child labor, including in agriculture.(1-3) Children are also engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation.(1, 4-6) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Lebanon. Data on some of these indicators are not available from the sources used in this report.

Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Attending School (%)	5-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Combining Work and School (%)	7-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Primary Completion Rate (%)		86.2

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2012, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2013.(7)
Data were unavailable from Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis, 2013.(8)

Based on a review of available information, Table 2 provides an overview of children's work by sector and activity.

Table 2. Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity

Sector/Industry	Activity
Agriculture	Picking olives,* potatoes,* citrus fruit,* beans,* and figs* (1, 9-11)
	Production of tobacco† (9, 12)
	Clearing rocks and preparing ground for planting* (1, 13)
	Fishing,* activities unknown (2, 3)
Industry	Construction,† including carpentry and welding*† (2, 3, 9)
	Rock quarrying*† (14)
	Making handicrafts* (2, 9, 12)

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Table 2. Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity (cont)

Sector/Industry	Activity
Services	Street work,† including peddling,* portering,* begging,* washing cars,* scavenging garbage,*† and shining shoes (1, 2, 9, 10, 12, 15)
	Maintenance and repair of motor vehicles† (2, 9, 14)
	Building maintenance, including painting† and cleaning* (1, 2, 9)
	Domestic work† (3, 9, 16)
	Cleaning sewage*† (1-3)
	Food service*† (3, 15)
	Working in the preparation of bodies for funerals and burials*† (17, 18)
	Cleaning market places* (1, 2)
	Working in slaughterhouses*† and butcheries* (2, 3)
	Working in small shops* (2, 15)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Used in illicit activities, including drug trafficking sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and arms dealing* (3, 4, 18, 19)
	Forced begging sometimes as a result of human trafficking (4, 6, 20)
	Commercial sexual exploitation sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1, 4-6, 12, 19)
	Work in agriculture as a result of human trafficking* (3, 6)

* Evidence of this activity is limited and/or the extent of the problem is unknown.

† Determined by national law or regulation as hazardous and, as such, relevant to Article 3(d) of ILO C. 182.

‡ Child labor understood as the worst forms of child labor *per se* under Article 3(a) – (c) of ILO C. 182.

Children who work in agriculture, mainly in the districts of Akkar, Hermel, Baalbek, and South Lebanon, often do not attend school during harvesting and planting seasons.(13, 21) Children working on the streets are sometimes forced into commercial sexual exploitation and illicit work by criminal gangs and acquaintances. A 2011 study found that boys working on the street are at a high risk of sexual exploitation by peers and by men.(4) Lebanon is a source country for children, especially girls, trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation, domestic service, and criminal activity. Lebanon is also a destination country for children trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation.(4, 6) Syrian girls, particularly, are trafficked into Lebanon for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation under the guise of marriage.(4, 6)







The Syrian conflict has caused a large influx of refugees to Lebanon. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported that as of December 2014, more than half of the 1.15 million Syrians who had sought refuge in Lebanon were children.(22) Working in the streets is especially common among refugee children, including Palestinian, Iraqi, and Syrian, as well as Dom children (an ethnic minority).(12, 23) Refugee families face extreme poverty, making their children more vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor.(6, 24) There is limited evidence of recruitment of children for use in armed conflict in Syria.(25, 26)

The law guarantees free compulsory education for children, but only for Lebanese citizens.(27) Noncitizen children, including stateless and refugee children, have limited access to education. While Palestinian refugees cannot access public schools, they are required to attend schools operated by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).(21, 24, 28) Although Syrian refugees can access public education, the public school system in Lebanon does not have the capacity to accommodate the large number of school-age Syrian refugee children.(24) As of summer 2014, only 20 percent of school-age Syrian refugee children attended schools in Lebanon.(28) Lack of awareness about education opportunities, school fees, costs of transportation and supplies, use of schools as shelters, and lack of security are among the barriers to education.(25, 28, 29) Lebanese children face similar barriers in accessing education.(21) Likewise, Iraqi refugee children may not be enrolled in school due to such reasons as school-related costs, reliance on child labor income, and discrimination.(30) Additionally, in Lebanon many classes are taught in French or English, whereas Syrian and Iraqi children are used to learning all subjects in Arabic.(29, 30)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Lebanon has ratified most key international conventions concerning child labor (Table 3).

Table 3. Ratification of International Conventions on Child Labor

Convention	Ratification
 ILO C. 138, Minimum Age	✓
 ILO C. 182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	✓
 UN CRC	✓
 UN CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	✓
 UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography	✓
 Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	✓

The Government of Lebanon has established laws and regulations related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 4).

Table 4. Laws and Regulations Related to Child Labor

Standard	Yes/No	Age	Related Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	14	Article 22 of the Labor Code (31)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 1 of the Decree No. 8987 (32)
Prohibition of Hazardous Occupations or Activities for Children	Yes		Annex 1 of the Decree No. 8987 (32)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Articles 586.1 and 586.5 of the Law on the Punishment of Human Trafficking (33)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 586.1 and 586.5 of the Law on the Punishment of Human Trafficking (33)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 523-527 and 507-510 of the Penal Code (34); Articles 586.1 and 586.5 of the Law on the Punishment of Human Trafficking (33)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Article 618 of the Penal Code (34); Articles 586.1 and 586.5 of the Law on the Punishment of Human Trafficking (33)
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	N/A*		
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	Yes	18	Article 30 of the National Defense Law (35)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	12	Article 49 of Education Law (21, 27)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 49 of Education Law (27)

* No conscription (36)

The law requires Lebanese citizens to attend school only until the age of 12. This standard makes children ages 12-14 particularly vulnerable to child labor, as they are not required to be in school but are not legally permitted to work.(37) Additionally, according to the Ministry of Labor's Unit for the Combat of Child Labor, penalties for criminal violations of child labor and related laws are not sufficient to deter future violations.(12) Draft legal amendments to address compulsory education age and insufficient penalties remain pending.(12, 38)

Lebanese law is not consistent in its treatment of children working in begging. Article 610 of the Penal Code criminalizes begging.(34) Reports refer to limited cases in which children working as beggars have been arrested.(23) However, Articles 25 and 26 of the Delinquent Juveniles Law stipulate that child begging endangers children and that such children are entitled to protective measures.(23, 39)

III. ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor, including its worst forms (Table 5).

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Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Labor (MOL)	Enforce child labor laws through workplace inspections.(12) Maintain a hotline to receive labor-related complaints, including cases of child labor.(3)
Internal Security Forces	Enforce laws regarding the worst forms of child labor through the Anti-Human Trafficking and Morals Protection Bureau.(12, 40)
Ministry of Justice	Prosecute violations of the Penal Code in coordination with the Internal Security Forces and the Ministry of Social Affairs' Higher Council for Childhood. Maintain general data and statistics on criminal violations involving the worst forms of child labor.(12) Refer at-risk children to shelters and protection services.(3)
Ministry of Justice's Union for Protection of Juveniles in Lebanon	Refer ill-treated children, children in conflict with the law, and child victims of human trafficking and other forms of worst forms of child labor to social services. Coordinate juvenile justice procedures and advise juvenile court judges on referring child labor victims to appropriate social services.(12, 16)
Ministry of Social Affairs	Refer children identified by the Internal Security Forces and the Ministry of Justice to protective institutions, such as health centers.(3, 16) Refer children to shelters through its Higher Council for Childhood.(12)
Directorate of General Security's Hotline	Receive complaints, including on human trafficking.(41)

Law enforcement agencies in Lebanon took actions to combat child labor, including its worst forms.

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2014, the Ministry of Labor (MOL) employed 90 labor inspectors, including administrators. Labor inspectors did not receive child labor training in the reporting period. MOL did, however, provide a guide, developed in cooperation with the American University in Beirut, on best practices for implementing Decree No. 8987.(3) Additionally, MOL does not have the resources to provide inspectors with the necessary office equipment or transportation to enforce child labor laws.(3) Although, in theory, labor inspectors can initiate both routine and complaint-based inspections, including unannounced, desk reviews, and on-site inspections, due to a lack of resources, almost all inspections are generally complaint-based. MOL did not receive any child labor complaints in the reporting period, thus no inspection was performed.(3)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2014, the head of the Anti-Human Trafficking and Morals Protection Bureau of the Internal Security Forces stated that the Bureau lacks sufficient staff and that officers are routinely pulled from their duties to perform other tasks.(3) The Human Rights Institute of the Beirut Bar Association published an informational manual on the legal provisions and best practices to combat human trafficking as well as 500 copies of a handbook on human-trafficking indicators to help officials identify victims. Trainings were also provided for the staff of the Directorate of General Security, the Internal Security Forces, and the Lebanese Armed Forces.(40) However, officials of the Ministry of Justice indicate that judges need more training on the application of the Law on the Punishment of Human Trafficking.(41) The Internal Security Forces investigated five cases of human trafficking, including those that involved child victims. The Ministry of Justice prosecuted 34 cases of human trafficking, including cases of forced child labor in begging.(41) Six individuals were convicted under the Law on the Punishment of Human Trafficking. In addition, two cases of forced child labor in begging, initiated prior to 2014, resulted in convictions of 10-year imprisonment and fines.(41) Research did not find information on the number of child labor and human trafficking complaints received through the Ministry and Labor and the Directorate of General Security's hotlines.

The Government did not generally provide protection, including shelter, to victims of human trafficking and continued to arrest, detain, and deport victims for crimes committed as a direct result of being trafficked.(6) Only one child was removed from a situation of commercial sexual exploitation and was handed over to NGO Abaad for further assistance.(3)

When a child is found to be involved in or a victim of criminal activities, the Internal Security Forces take the child into protective custody and contact the Ministry of Justice's Union for Protection of Juveniles in Lebanon, which then refers the child to appropriate social services. Given the Union's limited resources, the Ministry of Justice is in talks with more organizations to boost the number of social workers.(3)

IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government has established mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor, including its worst forms (Table 6).

Table 6. Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
MOL's Unit for the Combat of Child Labor	Raise awareness; coordinate efforts among government agencies; establish standard practices; and develop, enforce and recommend changes to the law and ensure they comply with it.(42) Led by the Minister of Labor, includes representatives from the National Social Security Fund; Ministries of Social Affairs; Public Health; Justice; and Agriculture; and National Employment Office.(43)
Inter-Ministerial Task Force on Human Trafficking	Coordinate efforts against human trafficking, including child trafficking.(44)

The UN coordinates efforts to address the needs of children affected by the Syrian refugee crisis in Lebanon and maintains interagency standards for child protection. Its agents identify crucial concerns, including factors that make children vulnerable to child labor, and make recommendations to the Government on the use of resources, including referral services.(24, 45)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government of Lebanon has established policies related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 7).

Table 7. Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Action Plan on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor (2013-2016)	Establishes strategies for addressing the worst forms of child labor. Includes a National Awareness Strategy to be carried out by the ILO.(12, 46)
National Social Development Strategy	Establishes a plan for a comprehensive social, health, and educational program.(47) Includes the protection of working children and the implementation of the Higher Council for Childhood's strategy to address the needs of street children.(48)
Ministry of Education and Higher Education's Education Sector Development Plan (2010-2015)*	Aims to improve quality learning during pre-school, general, and higher education levels; integral part of the National Social Development Strategy.(49)

* Child labor elimination and prevention strategies do not appear to have been integrated into this policy.

In 2014, MOL's Unit for the Combat of Child Labor was in the process of finalizing the National Awareness Strategy against the Worst Forms of Child Labor. The Unit also announced that it will update its website to become the main portal of information on all types of child labor.(3) The revamped website, expected to be launched in 2015, will also include an online child labor complaints system. Likewise, the Ministry of Social Affairs' Higher Council for Childhood launched its consultations with World Vision to draft a sectoral action plan on child trafficking, part of the National Action Plan for Child Protection.(3)

In 2013, government agencies, including the Internal Security Forces, and the Ministries of Justice, Interior, and Social Affairs introduced a draft of an Anti-Human Trafficking National Action Plan that outlines the roles and responsibilities of agencies involved in the identification of victims of human trafficking and in their referral to services. Based on the Plan, a national database is to be established to facilitate counter-trafficking activities.(5) Additionally, in 2012, the Government drafted the National Action Plan for Human Rights. The Plan provides recommendations on child labor coordination between relevant authorities. It also proposes legislative and executive procedures on 21 human rights topics, including children's rights.(12, 50) While both Plans await approval by Parliament, they are already being implemented by government agencies in cooperation with civil society and non-governmental organizations.(3)

The Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Social Affairs, and the Internal Security Forces, in cooperation with UNICEF, finalized a standard operating procedure (SOP) on child protection, including protection against human trafficking. The SOP defines the role of each of the agencies in implementing the law. The Ministry of Social Affairs is expected to approve the SOP in 2015 for it to become effective.(3)

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VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2014, the Government of Lebanon funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including its worst forms (Table 8).

Table 8. Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Reaching All Children through Education†	Part of the No Lost Generation initiative, a joint effort of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNICEF, and the World Bank.(3) Addresses needs of Syrian refugee children to increase access to education and provide a protective environment as well as life-skill building opportunities.(51) Enroll up to 200,000 children in first and second school shifts in 2014-2015 (i.e., the school day was divided, with some children attending in the morning and others in the afternoon, to accommodate the large number of students) and increased targets in subsequent years. Aims to provide a productive, safe alternative to child labor.(3)
National Poverty Alleviation Program‡	Funded by the Government, the Italian Foreign Ministry, the World Bank, and the Canadian Embassy, this Ministry of Social Affairs' program pays school tuition and book costs for 74,000 families living in extreme poverty.(12)
Higher Council for Childhood's program to eliminate child labor and street children	Funded by the Arab Council for Children and Development, the program includes training for the media on how to cover child labor cases, a study on street children in collaboration with St. Joseph University, training programs for social workers, and awareness campaigns for the general public.(12)
Education Program for Syrian Refugee Children	The Ministry of Education and Higher Education, and UNHCR support the War Child Holland initiative, which provides education to qualified refugee children in 13 public schools in Beirut and Mount Lebanon. Supports second shift courses and informal educational activities, designed to give students the necessary skills to enroll in public schools.(52)
Global Action Program on Child Labor Issues	USDOL-funded project implemented by the ILO in approximately 40 countries to support the priorities of the Roadmap for Achieving the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor by 2016, established by the Hague Global Child Labor Conference in 2010. Aims to improve the evidence base on child labor and forced labor through data collection and research.(53) In 2014, in preparation for a national child labor survey in Lebanon, the ILO finalized the questionnaire and the planning of geographic areas to be covered in the survey.(53)
Child Protection Committee†	Joint program by UNICEF and the Ministry of Social Affairs. Addresses worst forms of child labor interventions, including through counseling, enrolling children in school, and working with employers to decrease working hours for children and improve work conditions.(3) Currently implementing programs for children in armed conflict and refugee children from Syria.(3, 21)

*The impact of this program on child labor does not appear to have been studied.

† Program was launched during the reporting period.

‡ Program is funded by the Government of Lebanon.

As shown in Table 8, NGOs and UN agencies are the main providers of children's social protection services, including for child victims of trafficking.(4) The scarcity of shelters for child-trafficking victims results in some children being placed in juvenile detention centers.(21) The lack of shelters and resources to effectively handle child labor and trafficking cases puts children at a heightened risk of further exploitation.

Lebanon lacks programs to address child labor in agriculture, street work, domestic service, and commercial sexual exploitation.

VII. SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Based on the reporting above, suggested actions are identified that would advance the elimination of child labor, including its worst forms, in Lebanon (Table 9).

Table 9. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including its Worst Forms

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Accede to the CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict, which the Government signed in 2002.	2013 – 2014
	Raise the compulsory education age to harmonize it with the minimum age for work.	2010 – 2014
	Ensure that the law does not criminalize child begging.	2011 – 2014
Enforcement	Ensure adequate funding for staff, equipment, and transportation for the Ministry of Labor and the Internal Security Forces as well as training for labor inspectors and judges.	2011 – 2014

Table 9. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including its Worst Forms (cont)

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Enforcement	Track and make publicly available the number of complaints received through the Government's hotlines on child labor and human trafficking.	2014
	Ensure child victims of human trafficking are treated as victims rather than as criminals under the law.	2011 – 2014
Government Policies	Integrate child labor elimination and prevention strategies into the Education Sector Development Plan.	2013 – 2014
	Adopt a policy that addresses all relevant worst forms of child labor, such as human trafficking.	2013 – 2014
Social Programs	Ensure that noncitizen children, including refugee and stateless children, have access to free and compulsory primary education.	2010 – 2014
	Assess the impact that the National Poverty Alleviation Program may have on child labor.	2010 – 2014
	Increase the number of shelters for juvenile victims of human trafficking and other worst forms of child labor.	2013 – 2014
	Institute programs to address child labor in agriculture, street work, domestic service, and commercial sexual exploitation.	2013 – 2014

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